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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSA #3450 2741517
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 011517Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2065
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0576
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0264
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0063
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0179
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS PRETORIA 003450

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DEPT FOR AF/S
ISN/ECC NJOHANSON, JMCLELLAN
ENERGY FOR LPARKER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ENRG PARM ETTC MNUC TRGY PREL KNNP SF AR
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA RECEPTIVE TO COMMODITIES
IDENTIFICATION TRAINING IN ARGENTINA

REF: STATE 125437

¶1. (SBU) Ambassador Eric M. Bost joined Argentine Ambassador to South Africa R. Carlos Sersale di Cerisano to deliver a joint invitation to the SAG for the Commodities Identification Training (CIT) to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina December 3-7, 2007. The invitation was delivered to Department of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director General and Special Representative for Disarmament and NEPAD Ambassador Abdul Minty on September 29. Minty was receptive to the idea of sending South African officials responsible for export control policy, licensing, and enforcement to Buenos Aires to attend CIT. He went so far as to ask whether South Africa could send up to two additional participants at SAG expense. The U.S Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory will sponsor the lodging and travel expenses for five participants.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador di Cerisano told Minty that Argentina hopes the U.S will also invite officials from Chile and Uruguay in an effort to help those countries strengthen their capacity to address illicit trafficking of proliferation-sensitive, strategic commodities. Minty was interested in finding out what other countries would participate and suggested that Brazil also be invited. In addition, Minty stated that South Africa would like to help other African countries develop their non-proliferation capacity. Ambassador di Cerisano also invited Minty to participate in the opening ceremonies of the workshop. Minty said that he will need ten days to two weeks to coordinate with relevant agencies and then offer an official response.

¶3. (SBU) In an unrelated conversation with DCM (Septel), Minty reiterated his interest in observing the CIT in Argentina, noting that his only concern was to ensure that all relevant SAG structures could participate. He confirmed SAG willingness to pay the expenses of additional personnel beyond the five DOE-subsidized slots. Minty regretted the cancellation of the planned June 2007 training in South Africa, explaining that the Non-Proliferation Council had been in "intensive discussions" with Customs and therefore "the timing was just not useful." He said the internal SAG discussions were winding down and indicated the SAG would eventually be interested in hosting its own CIT workshop, to which it would like to invite other African partners.
Bost